

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to
communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice,
comprising the steps of:
 - (a) receiving a text email message;
 - (b) parsing the name of an intended recipient;
 - (c) determining if the intended recipient is an authorized user;
 - (d) if the intended recipient is authorized, assigning a message-
specific indicia to the message;
 - (e) if the intended recipient is authorized, appending a reply notice with
the message-specific indicia to the message;
 - (f) if a reply notice is appended, saving the email message with the
reply notice appended thereto; and
 - (g) if the intended recipient is authorized, transmitting the email
message with the reply notice to the intended recipient.
2. The method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to
communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice
according to claim 1, further comprising the step of rejecting the email
message if the intended recipient is not authorized.

3. A method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice, comprising the steps of:

(a) extracting message header information from a received text email message;

(b) dividing the message header information into components thereof;

(c) analyzing the components of the message header;

(d) assigning a message-specific indicia to the message;

(e) appending a reply notice comprising an instruction to the recipient that in order to reply to the text email by phone the recipient must initiate a telephone call to a selected phone number and enter the assigned message-specific indicia;

(f) saving the email message with the reply notice appended thereto; and

(g) transmitting the email message with the reply notice to the intended recipient.

4. The method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice according to claim 3, further comprising the step of determining whether the name and email address of the sender of the email message are recorded in an address list, and, if not, entering the name and address thereof.

5. The method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice according to claim 4, further comprising the step of determining whether the name and email address of the sender of the email message are recorded in an address list, and, if not, entering the name and address thereof.

6. A method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice, comprising the steps of:

- (a) receiving a call in an email server from the user of the portable electronic device;
- (b) determining if the caller is registered as a user of the email server;
- (c) obtaining a pre-assigned message-identifying code from the caller;
- (d) authenticating the message-identifying code;
- (e) requesting the caller to record a voice message;
- (f) recording the voice message; and
- (g) transmitting the voice message to the user of the office-based terminal.

7. The method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice according to

claim 6, further comprising the step of converting the recorded voice message into a format adapted for attachment to an electronic message.

8. The method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice according to claim 6, further comprising the steps of playing an error message and terminating the program if the caller is not registered as a user of the email server.

9. The method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice according to claim 6, further comprising the step of determining if the recorded message is acceptable and if not, recording the message again.

10.A method for enabling a user of a portable electronic device to communicate with a user of an office-based terminal by voice, comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving a call in an email server from the user of the portable electronic device;

(b) determining if the caller is registered as a user of the email server;

(c) obtaining a pre-assigned message-identifying code from the caller;

(d) authenticating the message-identifying code;

(e) requesting the caller to record a voice message;

- (f) recording the voice message;
- (g) converting the recorded voice message into MP-3 format; and
- (h) transmitting the voice message to the user of the office-based terminal.